

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02993 061249Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9399

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2993

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LE

SUBJ: DEMORALIZATION OF CHRISTIANS

REF: STATE 81375

1. AS YOU WILL HAVE SEEN FROM MY TOO LONG REPORT OF MY TALKS WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS YESTERDAY, I'VE TAKEN GREAT PAINS WITH EACH TO LET THEM KNOW WE ARE SYMPATHETIC WITH THEIR PLIGHT AND WANT THEM TO BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE FROM STRENGTH AND NOT REPEAT NOT HAVE TO CAPITULATE THROUGH WEAKNESS.

2. OUR DATT WILL BE REPORTING HIS TALKS WITH THE MILITARY IN JOUNIEH. I TOOK HIM WITH ME FOR THAT PURPOSE. ESSENCE OF HIS REPORT IS THAT CHRISTIAN REMNANTS OF THE LEBANESE ARMED FORCES IN THAT AREA ARE SMALL IN NUMBER AND ARE LOOSELY STRUCTURED. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF THE SENIOR CHRISTIAN OFFICERS HAD ASSUMED COMBAT AND LOGISTICAL ROLES ON THEIR OWN RESPONSIBILITY IN THE DEFENSE OF THE CHRISTIAN HEARTLAND AND SEEM TO BE PERFORMING A CREDITABLE JOB DESPITE SERIOUS PERSONNEL AND SUPPLY SHORTAGES. THE LEBANESE NAVY AT JOUNIEH IS RELATIVELY INTACT BUT PASSIVE. THE ARMY CASERNE AT SARBA IS BEING USED JOINTLY BY CHRISTIAN ARMY AND MILITIA ELEMENTS. ITS COMMANDER IS PERFORMING MAINTENANCE

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AND RE-SUPPLY FUNCTIONS FOR COMBAT DETACHMENTS WHICH ARE

DISPERSED ALONG THE DEFENSIVE PERIMETER OF CHRISTIAN
TERRITORY. THERE ARE SERIOUS SHORTAGES IN GASOLINE AND
CERTAIN TYPES OF AMMUNITION, PARTICULARLY ARTILLERY AMMUNI-
TION. BUT IN DATT'S ESTIMATE, CHRISTIAN FORCES SHOULD BE
ABLE TO CONDUCT DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS SUCCESSFULLY FOR A
PERIOD OF 5-7 DAYS AT LEVELS EXPERIENCED IMMEDIATELY
PRIOR TO APRIL TRUCE.
BROWN

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